No. 66

MINUTES

OF

THE ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD

OF IRELAND,

HELD IN BELFAST, JUNE 27, 1859.

PRINTED BY JOHN [illegible] AND M'CLURE,
6, PO[illegible]LACE,
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BELFAST, 27TH JUNE, 1859.

SEVEN O'CLOCK, P.M.

THE Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland met, and, after a discourse by the Moderator, the Rev. ROBERT NEVIN, founded on Isaiah viii. 16—"Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples"—was constituted by prayer.

The roll being called, the following ministers and ruling elders were present, viz. :—

NORTHERN PRESBYTERY.

MINISTERS.	RULING ELDERS	CONGREGATIONS.
Professor Dick,	Saml. Clugson, Robert Dill, alternate,	Kellswater.
James A. Smith,	John Barnes,	Drimbolg.
William Toland,		Kilraughts.
John Hart,	William Kennedy,	Ballylaggan.
	James Lyons,	Ballymoney & Dervock.
	James Nevin,	Clabbar.
		Ringrash.

WESTERN PRESBYTERY.

MINISTERS.	RULING ELDERS.	CONGREGATIONS.
Robert Nevin,	Edward Hall,	Londonderry.
Josias A. Chancellor,		Bready.
		Faughan.
		Newtownlimavady.
		Convoy and Donegal.

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY.

Samuel Simms,.....Loughbrickland.
Wm. S. Ferguson,.....Grange.
Robert Wallace,.....Newry.
Alex. Savage,.....Sandy Small, ...Ballenon.
Robert Allen,.....Dublin.
.....Bailiesmill.
.....Ballylane.
.....Crievah and Fairview.
.....Rathfriland.
.....Dromore.

EASTERN PRESBYTERY.

William Russell,...Doctor Clugson,.....Ballyclare.
William M'Carroll,.John Potts,.....Belfast.
William Hannah,.....
.....John Shaw,.....Knockbracken.
.....Newtownards.
.....Killinchy.
.....Manchester.

The following ministers and ruling elders afterwards appeared in Court, took their seats, and had their names added to the roll, viz.:—

NORTHERN PRESBYTERY.

Robert Wilson, elder, from Kilraughts.

WESTERN PRESBYTERY.

Rev. James P. Sweeny, Faughan, with his elder, Joseph Clarke; Rev. James Kennedy, Newtownlimavady, with his elder, William Blair; and William Wright, elder, from Bready.

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY.

Rev. Hutchinson M'Fadden, Ballylane; Rev. Thomas Hart, Rathfriland, with his elder, John M'Kee; Thomas Galway, elder, from Bailiesmill; George F. Long, elder, from Loughbrickland; and James Shaw, elder, from Newry.

PRESBYTERY OF NOVA SCOTIA AND NEW BRUNSWICK.

Rev. James Reid Lawson.

1. In the absence of the stated Clerk, Rev. J. W. Graham, the Rev. Robert Wallace was appointed to act as Clerk, *pro tempore*.

2. The Western Presbytery intimated that, since the last meeting of Synod, they have ordained the Rev. Joseph A. Moody to the office of the holy ministry and pastoral oversight of the united congregation of Convoy and Donegal. Mr. Moody's name, and that of his elder, Alexander Smyth, were consequently added to the roll.

3. The Rev. Alexander Savage is unanimously chosen Moderator for the ensuing year.

4. It was arranged that the Rev. James Kennedy, in accordance with the appointment made in min. 10 of last year, should preach here on Thursday evening, at seven o'clock.

5. The Clerks of Presbyteries (Messrs. Toland, Russell, Wallace, and Chancellor) were appointed a committee on Bills and Overtures, and also to prepare an Order of Business. To meet to-morrow morning, at half-past nine o'clock. Adjourned by prayer.

SESSION II.

Tuesday, 10 o'clock, a.m.

Synod met and was constituted—devotional exercises being conducted by the Rev. Robert Allen.

6. The Rev. James Reid Lawson, one of Synod's Missionaries in the North American British Colonies, and Pastor of Barnsville, being now in Court, Synod hail with much satisfaction the presence of their beloved brother with them; and appoint Thursday afternoon, at 5 o'clock, to hear his statements regarding the position and prospects of the mission with which he is connected; and the condition of the Church generally in these colonies.

7. Synod is also much gratified by observing in the house the Rev. Thomas Hannay, a Minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States of North America; and he is very cordially invited to a seat in Court. Mr. Hannay presents his certificate, and takes his seat as a consultative

member. Mr. Hannay also, at the request of Synod, promises to give an address on the afternoon of Thursday.

8. Synod unanimously requested the late Moderator, the Rev. Robert Nevin, to publish the discourse preached at the opening of Synod; which request Mr. Nevin promised to take into his serious consideration.

9. The Secretaries of the different schemes (Messrs. Russell, Simms, Wallace, and Chancellor) were appointed a committee to examine the state of the collections, and Messrs. James Reynolds and Samuel M'Keown were appointed to audit the accounts.

10. The Rev. Samuel Simms read the report of the Committee on Sacred Music, which was adopted, and Synod expressed its approbation of the diligence of the committee, and instructed Presbyteries and Sessions to pay particular attention to this matter, and to see that a properly qualified person is appointed to conduct the music in each congregation; and as far as possible instruct the people, chiefly the youths, in the principles and practice of sacred music, so that the church may be enabled to praise God "skilfully." The committee was continued, and directed to have a list of tunes submitted to Synod for their consideration before adjournment.

11. The next meeting of Synod was appointed to be held in Belfast, on the last Monday of June, 1860, at seven o'clock in the evening. And that in addition to the opening sermon by the Moderator, a discourse be preached by the Rev. James A. Smyth, at such time during the sittings as may be found convenient.

12. The subject of the religious awakenings, at present taking place in the North of Ireland, was brought before the Court, when it was arranged that Synod meet in private to-morrow morning, at seven o'clock, to confer on this matter.

13. A kind and fraternal letter from the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States of North America, in reply to a communication recently forwarded from this Church was read. The interesting statements it contained regarding the state and prospects of our fathers' testimony, and missionary enterprise in that vast continent, and the affectionate spirit it breathed, afforded much gratification to the Court.

Synod devolved the subject of correspondence with sister Churches upon the Commission.

14. In reference to min. 16 of last year, Mr. Chancellor stated his determination not to accept any remuneration for travelling expenses. Commission was enjoined to appoint a small committee to co-operate with Mr. Chancellor in collecting manuscripts, and in any other way that might be deemed expedient, in accomplishing the important object intrusted to him—viz., the preparation of a history and historical vindication of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Synod adjourned by prayer.

SESSION III.

Tuesday, 5 o'clock, p.m,

Synod met and resumed judicial procedure.

15. The plan of education in Overture, as revised by the commission, was read, and the consideration thereof occupied the Court until the hour of adjournment, when Dr. Houston and Mr. Wallace were appointed a committee to embody the alterations and emendations suggested by the Court, and forthwith publish this as "The plan of Education for Candidates for the Ministry in the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland."

Adjourned by prayer.

SESSION IV.

Wednesday, 10 o'clock, a.m.

Synod met and resumed judicial business, devotional exercises being conducted by Rev. Thomas Hannay.

16. The clerks of Presbyteries were appointed a committee on preachers' appointments.

17. The reports of Presbyteries were then received.

(*See Appendix.*)

18. The Rev. Josias A. Chancellor, Home Mission Secretary, read the report of the "Ministerial support and Home

Missions" for the past year, which on the motion of Dr. Clugson, seconded by Mr. George Frederick Long, was unanimously adopted.

19. Several matters referred to in this report were then taken into consideration, when it was moved and unanimously agreed to, that a committee consisting of Revs. Professor Dick, James Kennedy, Robert Wallace, and J. A. Chancellor, be appointed to revise the whole Home Mission scheme, and report to the next meeting of Synod what changes, if any, in the working of the scheme they consider desirable.

20. And furthermore, in accordance with a suggestion contained in the Home Mission Report, the Rev. Samuel Simms, and Rev. J. A. Chancellor, with the following ruling elders, viz., Joseph Clarke and William Wright of the Western Presbytery, Sandy Small and George F. Long, of the Southern Presbytery, Samuel Clugson and William Kennedy, of the Northern Presbytery, Doctor Clugson and James Reynolds, of the Eastern Presbytery, were appointed to visit, by deputations from their number, the congregations of this church, especially the larger and more wealthy, and endeavour to bring them to pay, at least, one hundred pounds per annum of stipend.

Adjourned by prayer.

SESSION V.

Wednesday, 5 o'clock, p.m.

Synod met and resumed.

21. The Rev. Robert Wallace, Secretary of the Hall, read the report of the Theological Hall for the past session, which, on the motion of the Rev. J. A. Smyth, seconded by the Rev. John Hart, was unanimously adopted.

22. The subject of teaching the students Moral Philosophy was then taken into consideration, when, after various suggestions by several members of Synod, it was ultimately arranged that the Professors mature and present a plan for accomplishing this object to the meeting of Commission in October.

The Moderator, with Revs. M'Carroll, Nevin, and Wallace,

were appointed the Committee of Superintendence of the Hall for the ensuing Session. The Session to commence on the 26th of July.

23. The Rev. William Russell, Secretary of Irish Mission, read the report of the Irish Missions for the past year which, on the motion of Professor Houston, seconded by Professor Dick, was unanimously adopted.

The whole subject of the Irish Missionary operations was then taken up.

The Rev. Robert Allen addressed the Court in regard to his labours in Dublin. Several interesting extracts were read from Mr. M'Tighe's letters and journals; and a paper read from the newly-organised congregation in Dublin, praying Synod to continue Mr. Allen as their Missionary in that city, in order that they may enjoy the advantage of his ministerial labours.

After a lengthened consideration of the whole subject, Revs. Professor Dick, Russell, and Kennedy were appointed a committee to confer with Mr. Allen, in regard to his continuing to labour in Dublin.

Other matters contained in the report were referred to Commission, with instructions to use means to carry the suggestions therein contained into operation.

Synod having been informed by the Secretary of the very liberal offer made to the Church, by a member of Knockbracken congregation, in favour of the Irish Mission—viz., that he will bear the whole expenses of ministers in making monthly visits to Connaught for one year—cannot but record their gratitude to God for such substantial aid and encouragement in the prosecution of this work, and acknowledge the obligation arising out of it, to send as many of our ministers as can be induced to undertake the Mission during the year. It is therefore agreed, that the Presbyteries be instructed to use their utmost diligence to send, in rotation, one of their number to the West of Ireland, to visit the district occupied by our missions, and preach as they may have opportunity. And it is agreed, that the thanks of this Court are due to the gentleman referred to, for so generous a proposal in favour of a mission in which all feel so deeply interested. The Clerk of

Synod is directed to transmit a copy of this minute to the gentleman making this very liberal offer.

The following arrangements were then made for immediately carrying this resolution into effect, viz. :—

Rev. J. A. Smyth	to visit Connaught	in	August.
„ W. S. Ferguson	„		September.
„ William Russell	„		October.
„ Josias A. Chancellor	„		November.
„ John Hart	„		December.
„ Robert Wallace	„		January.

The Commission to confer with Presbyteries in regard to filling up the rest of the time until next Synod.

24. On behalf of the Committee on the Code of Discipline, Professor Dick reports, that for reasons deemed satisfactory by the Court, the *Code* was not yet ready to be submitted to Synod, but that it is fully expected to be in readiness next year.

25. The Rev. Josias A. Chancellor submitted the following preamble and resolutions, on the subject of the sale of intoxicating drinks by members of the Church, which were unanimously adopted :—

Considering the alarming extent to which the traffic in purely intoxicating drinks is carried on in this land, with at least the permissive sanction of the Christian Church, and the fact that there are still found persons in connexion with some of our congregations who continue to be engaged in it; and *whereas* the production of these drinks on such a scale is attended with the systematic and extensive violation of the Lord's day, causes the destruction of a large proportion of those substances which God designed for the food of man, and is nowhere warranted in the Word of God; and *whereas* the common sale of these drinks is not required to meet any necessary want or lawful demand of society, but is the principal cause and incentive to the sin of drunkenness, with its terrible accompaniments of profanity, degradation, and crime, and is the standing source of an incalculable amount of misery and waste, destitution and death, to the community at large; and *whereas* this Synod has repeatedly recorded its disapproval of this traffic, as being "highly inexpedient" and "demoralizing," and its earnest desire that the members of this Church should abandon all connexion with it—which, however, has not yet been fully carried into effect; *therefore* Synod feels called upon solemnly to renew its testimony and warning against this traffic for the aforesaid reasons, and also especially because it presents a powerful obstacle to the revival of true religion, particularly at the present time, when religious impressions are leading some who had been engaged in the traffic voluntarily

to give it up; and would hereby affectionately entreat all who are engaged in it at once to abandon so dangerous and indefensible an employment; and would earnestly warn the members of the Church, as they value the interests of religion and the well-being of the community, to abstain from affording to it any measure of encouragement or support; and in order to give effect to this warning and entreaty, it is RESOLVED—

First—That Presbyteries be, and hereby are required at an early period, to ascertain if the deliverance of Synod in 1849, which says: "Synod unanimously disapprove of the traffic in ardent spirits, and declare that no member of the Church who opens a house for carrying on this trade shall be entitled to church privileges," has been strictly carried out in all their congregations.

Second—That they be also required to ascertain how many of their members engaged in this traffic have been in it previous to the year 1849, and what diligence Sessions have used to carry out the latter part of the minute above referred to, which "instructs Sessions, if there be any members under their inspection engaged in this trade, to deal with them with the view of inducing them to discontinue it."

Third—That where Sessions have failed in realizing this object, Presbyteries are hereby instructed to use such means as may seem to them most suitable for carrying it into effect, and report progress at next meeting of Synod.

Fourth—The ministers of this Church are hereby enjoined to embrace every fitting opportunity of testifying against the evils of intemperance, and against the practices and customs which contribute thereunto; and as a practical and effective testimony against this prevailing vice, as well as a safe preservative from its seductive influences, they are recommended to promote the establishment and usefulness of Congregational Total Abstinence Associations.

Synod adjourned by prayer.

SESSION VI.

Thursday, 10 o'clock, a.m.

Synod met, and being re-constituted, the Rev. James Reid Lawson conducted the devotional exercises.

26. It was arranged that Synod meet in *interloquitur* at four o'clock to-day, to take into consideration a communication from Rev. Dr. Cunningham, and the elders of the Reformed Presbyterian congregation of London, which the Committee on Bills recommended to be read in private.

27. According to pre-arrangement, the Rev. Samuel Simms

submitted a list of tunes, when Revs. James Kennedy, J. R. Lawson, and J. A. Moody, with Messrs. William Wright, Jas. Shaw, and John Potts, were appointed a committee to revise this list, and report to Synod at ten o'clock, to-morrow morning.

28. The Rev. Samuel Simms, the Secretary, read the *Thirty-first* annual report of the Colonial Mission, which, on the motion of Rev. James Kennedy, seconded by Rev. Wm. Russell, was unanimously adopted.

In relation to the Mission to the British North American Colonies, Synod express their high appreciation of the self-denying labours, faithfulness and devotedness of their beloved brethren the missionaries, and recommend to the Church here to tender to them a more liberal support—the Commission being hereby instructed to carry into effect this recommendation, according to the established order in making supplementary grants to congregations in this country.

The Rev. James A. Smyth made a number of highly interesting and encouraging statements regarding Australia, and handed in Fifty Pounds sterling, received by him from Mr. James Kilpatrick, West Bargo, to aid in supporting and extending the Australian Mission. Several extracts of a highly encouraging nature, were also read from Mr. Moore's letters. Synod expressed thankfulness to the God of missions for these tokens of His favour, and instructed Commission to use diligence to obtain a suitable agent to proceed to Australia, as soon as practicable.

29. The committee appointed to confer with Mr. Allen reported that they were of opinion no change should take place in reference to the sphere of his labours in the meantime; but that the whole matter should be referred to the Commission, to be considered by them at their first meeting.

30. The Committee on the Terms of Communion report that they have had the subject under consideration, and request until next meeting of Synod to farther consider the matter; which request was granted, the committee being continued.

31. The Committee on Preachers' Appointments report, that, inasmuch as it is understood that Mr. Lillie is likely to proceed to Connaught immediately, they have made out no

appointments for him; and for the other licentiates, the arrangements do not extend beyond the month of January; and they request Synod to grant to Commission power to make all the other necessary arrangements, both for Mr. Lillie and the other licentiates. This report was received and adopted, and the following scale was submitted, viz:—

	July.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.
Mr. Brittin.....	E	E	S	N	S	W	S
Mr. Dick.....	W	S	N	S	N	N	E
Mr. Browne.....	S	N	E	E	E	S	N

32. Doctor Houston addressed the Court on the expediency and importance of this Church establishing a Mission to the Jews. He stated that several sums had been handed to him for supporting such a mission, and submitted the following resolutions, which had received the sanction of the Commission, viz.:—

1. Commission having been informed that several sums of money have been entrusted to them by members of the Church—either in the way of legacy or donation—to be applied to aid in efforts for the conversion of the Jews; and having, moreover, been made aware that, throughout various parts of the Church, the desire is entertained that such efforts should be engaged in, regard this as a call addressed to them, in Divine Providence, to attempt something in this important field of missions.

2. Considering that the Word of God contains many precious assurances that "all Israel shall be saved"—that their ingathering shall be the means of extensive and powerful revival to the Church—that by labours among the Jewish people, in various countries, access may be obtained to the Gentile race, whether in Popish, Mahommedan, or Pagan lands—and that there is all reason to believe that converted Israel will be an important instrumentality in the future glorious work of bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles: the Commission, therefore, under a solemn and deep sense of their special obligations to enter upon a work for the conversion of God's ancient covenant people, declare unanimously their conviction, that it is their duty, and that of the whole Covenanted Church in this land, to institute a special mission for this express object.

3. Furthermore, notwithstanding the limited extent and resources of the Church, the Commission, encouraged by the special goodness of the Head of the Church, in their past efforts to advance His glory, and the Christian liberality of His people, desire to rely with humble, but strong confidence in the assurance, that pecuniary means and a suitable instrumentality will not be wanting for prosecuting such a mission so soon as it shall be fully entered upon. The Commission finally resolve unanimously to recommend to the supreme judicatory this proposal to institute a mission to the Jews—submitting altogether to their wisdom what measures should be taken to give full establishment to this mission. Meanwhile they regard it as their present duty to encourage the members of the Church everywhere to seek the conversion of the seed of Abraham, and to devote their worldly substance and offer up their prayers for this purpose.

On the motion of Professor Dick, these resolutions were unanimously adopted, and a Jewish Mission formally established—Rev. Dr. Houston, Secretary; the details for carrying forward the Mission, being left to the Commission.

Adjourned by prayer.

SESSION VII.

Thursday, 5 o'clock, p,m.

Synod having spent from four o'clock, until the hour appointed for public business, in private, resumed judicial procedure.

33. Rev. James Reid Lawson addressed the Court in reference to the state of religion and the prospects of Covenanted Testimony in the North American British Colonies, with special reference to his own field of labour.

The following motion, proposed by the Rev. J. A. Chancellor, seconded by Dr. Houston, was passed unanimously—

Mr. Lawson having addressed the Court, giving a particular account of the mission district in which he labours, the position and prospects of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the British North American Colonies, and the Evangelical operations he is carrying on among the people under his own immediate charge—Synod expresses cordial satisfaction with the statements made, the unabated interest and affection which they cherish toward their young brother and his co-presby-

ters, and their earnest desire and hope that the pleasure of the Lord may still more abundantly prosper in their hands.

34. The Rev. Thomas Hannay, of the United States, then addressed the Court with regard unto the "Signs of the Times," and the present duty of the witnesses for Christ's prerogatives. The following motion, proposed by Mr. Nevin and seconded by Mr. Smyth, was unanimously carried—

That Synod is much gratified by the presence of Mr. Hannay with them on this occasion, as the representative of a section of the Church with which their fraternal sympathies are of the closest kind—has heard with interest Mr. Hannay's statements, and beg, through him, to send once more their affectionate greetings to the brethren in the United States of America."

35. The subject of the *Aged Ministers' and Widows' Fund*, was referred to the Commission, with instructions to give their earnest attention thereto at their first meeting.

36. The following were appointed the members of Commission for the ensuing year :—

The Moderator,
Revs. Dr. Stavely,
„ Professor Dick,
„ John Hart,
„ J. A. Chancellor,
„ Dr. Houston,
„ William Russell,
„ William M'Carroll,
„ Samuel Simms,
„ Robert Wallace,

Mr. William Harvey,
„ William Wright,
„ Samuel Clugston,
„ Ephraim Chancellor,
„ James Cairns,
„ John Gordon,
„ James Reynolds.

[The hour at which public worship was to commence having arrived, Synod was adjourned by prayer; after which, the Rev. James Kennedy preached a discourse on "Revivals," founded on Isaiah xxxii. 15.]

SESSION VIII.

Friday, 10 o'clock, a.m.

Synod met, and being re-constituted, Rev. Joseph A. Moody conducted devotional exercises.

37. Synod having met in private this morning, at seven o'clock, to finish the consideration of the communication received from Dr. Cunningham, and the elders of the congregation of London; the following resolution, in reference to the subject, proposed by Professor Dick, and seconded by Mr. Russell, was now unanimously adopted, viz.:—

That Synod highly appreciate the character of Dr. Cunningham as a Reformed Presbyterian minister—regard with interest the congregation to which he ministers, and are satisfied, so far as we can now judge, that they are of the same mind with us on the important practical question in which they have recently borne so honourable a part; but we are not prepared, in present circumstances, to admit that so decided a procedure as separating at once from the body with which they were connected was necessary or seasonable.

Synod appoint the following committee to correspond with Dr. Cunningham and the session in London:—The Moderator, Professor Dick, Mr. Chancellor, Mr. Toland, and Mr. Russell. Mr. Chancellor, convener.

38. The Committee specified in the foregoing minute was also appointed to take into consideration the relation subsisting between us and the Reformed Synod of Scotland.

39. The Sub-Committee on Sacred Music, appointed in minute 27, submitted a revised list of tunes; and the Committee on Music (Revs. Samuel Simms, Professor Dick, and Robert Nevin, with Mr. James Reynolds) were instructed as soon as convenient to publish a book for the use of the Church, embodying the recommendations of the sub-committee.

40. The Committee on the State of the Collections report that the collections in general were satisfactory; that *all* the congregations, with very few exceptions, sent forward *all* the collections. Synod expressed gratification at hearing this report, and enjoined Presbyteries to see that *all* the congregations in their several bounds attend to the

law of Synod in this matter, and take up ALL the collections ordered by the Supreme Court.

41. Messrs. Russell and M'Carroll submitted the following draft of "Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving" for the present year, which was adopted, viz.:—

CAUSES OF FASTING.

The awful war now raging in Italy, which threatens to involve other nations in its evils (though no doubt it shall be overruled, as preparing the way for the overthrow of evil systems, to the glory of God and the advancement of the Redeemer's cause); being in itself an awful manifestation of the deep-seated depravity and wickedness of the human heart. The grinding despotism under which not only the smaller States, but even the most powerful civilized nations groan—Slavery in many parts of the world—British legislation respecting religion, as exemplified in the settlement of affairs in India—The sinful expediency and infidel principles on which British legislation is conducted in these lands, in relation to the education of the young, and the support of religion—The refusal of nations enjoying the light of Divine revelation to acknowledge the moral dominion of the exalted Mediator—The ignorance, profanity, and ungodliness of large masses of society, especially in large towns—Deadness and formality in things spiritual and divine, and apathy still shown regarding the condition of the world that lies in wickedness—A defective sense of our obligations as arising out of God's law, and our own solemn vows, and our failure to attain to any adequate sense of God's abounding goodness towards us, and forbearance to the world around us, and to cherish habitually the frame of joyful thankfulness to the God of salvation, in which the Christian ought ever to abound.

CAUSES OF THANKSGIVING.

The steadfast adherence of our ministers and people to the Scriptural principles of the Church's Covenanted Testimony—The respect manifested by them for the comely order of God's house—Respect for divinely appointed ordinances and offices—A sober and devout attendance on the means of grace—Reason to believe that the Spirit of God is awakening many to a sense of their lost and perishing condition, and their need of a Saviour, and leading them to the fountain of cleansing—The access that the present condition of the public mind gives the ministers of the Gospel to the ignorant and profane—The encouragement furnished by the condition of the nations, particularly India and China, for the spread of the Gospel in foreign parts—The measure of Divine favour manifested towards our missionaries labouring in the North American British Colonies, in Australia, and in the dark places in our own island—The blessings of social order and public peace—The goodness of God in the seasons, and the prospect of an abundant harvest.

The Rev. Messrs. Simms and Ferguson were appointed a committee to prepare a draft of Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving for next year; and the same days—viz., the last Thursday of November as a day of thanksgiving, and the last Thursday of January, 1860, as a day of fasting—to be observed this year as formerly.

42. The Rev. William M'Carroll reported that the funds of the *Covenanter* were in a favourable condition, whilst there were still some arrears due. Synod urge that all arrears be paid as soon as possible, and enjoin that efforts be made to increase the circulation of the Magazine.

43. Dr. Houston stated that, for reasons deemed satisfactory by Synod, he had not the draft of the Historical Testimony in readiness, but trusted it will be prepared for next annual meeting. The Committee on the Testimony (Houston, Dick, Russell, and Chancellor) was continued—Dr. Houston, convener.

44. The following arrangements were made for supplying Manchester, viz. :—Eastern Presbytery in July; Western in August; Southern in September; Northern in October; and the Commission was empowered to make such other arrangements as may be found necessary, so as to give as full a supply of preaching as possible.

45. The Committee on the "Signs of the Times" was continued, consisting of Messrs. Houston and Toland.

46. Dr. Houston addressed the Court on the subject of "Revivals," with special reference to the duty of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in regard to the present awakenings; after which the following resolutions, submitted by Rev. Robert Nevin, were unanimously adopted:

The subject of "Revivals" having been before Synod in various forms, it was considered that the Court could not separate without some deliverance in regard to a matter of so much practical importance. It is therefore resolved—

1.—That without expressing any opinion with respect to the circumstances originating this movement, or the manner in which it may have been conducted in some quarters, Synod cannot but regard it as a reason for the most devout gratitude to the God of all grace, that there are so many and indubitable indications of increased earnestness in spiritual things, and delight in religious exercises, on the part of multitudes of professing Christians; and that there are also indications of many persons hitherto utterly careless, or ungodly and wicked, having been awakened to a concern for their souls, and the necessity for

reformation—many, it is to be hoped, having undergone a saving change.

2.—That it is not surprising there should be marks of human imperfection on any work in which man is engaged, as an instrument to any extent, in this world. Where there are errors, irregularities, and extravagances in any district, there is the greater reason why Gospel ministers should interfere, so far as may be consistent with right principle, so as to endeavour to give a proper tone and direction to this movement.

3.—That it should be ever remembered, that even strong convictions of sin do not amount in themselves to conversion, and may never issue therein; and it is desirable that ministers should set the whole truth on these and kindred subjects before their several congregations, especially at the present juncture—not forgetting how it is written, "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

4.—That there can be no impropriety in uniting with evangelical Christians of any denomination in exercises of praise, prayer, and reading the Bible, and every encouragement should be given to all who manifest a desire for such exercises, so long as Scriptural order and purity in such acts of worship are strictly adhered to.

5.—Synod recommend to ministers and elders to set more distinctly before them as the great end of all their labours, the conversion of immortal souls; and recommend furthermore to ministers, congregations, societies, families, and individuals, increased earnestness, fervency, and perseverance in pleading the great promise of the Gospel dispensation, and in wrestling with our covenant God, that the Spirit may be poured out from on high on the churches, and also on every barren field of earth, so that all may be made speedily fruitful, and every desert made to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

At half-past three o'clock in the afternoon, the Synod was finally adjourned by prayer, till the next annual meeting.

ROBERT WALLACE, CLERK *pro tem.*

APPENDIX.

REPORTS OF PRESBYTERIES.

I. WESTERN PRESBYTERY.

THE WESTERN REFORMED PRESBYTERY REPORT, that during the past year they have held seven meetings, all of them characterized by harmony, and some measure of zeal, in promoting the work of the Lord.

The various ordinances of religion have been dispensed in the congregations under their care with wonted regularity, and not without evidence of the presence and blessing of the Church's Head;—the collections appointed by Synod having been taken up with, it is believed, only one exception.

On the 3rd of August, a call from the congregation of Convoy and Donegal, to Mr. Joseph A. Moody, licentiate, having been duly sustained by Presbytery, was presented and accepted; and after the ordinary trials, Mr. Moody was ordained to the work of the ministry, with the the pastoral oversight of that congregation, on Wednesday, the 20th of October, 1859, at Convoy.

Presbytery are happy in being able to add, that there are already apparent satisfactory signs of progress and prosperity in connexion with that appointment.

Presbytery, however, has been greatly shocked and grieved by an occurrence of a most extraordinary and inexplicable character, in which the life of their young brother was suddenly brought into the most imminent jeopardy. Passing through the street of Convoy, on the night of Monday last, the 20th inst., as he returned from visiting a member of the church in sickness who resides in Raphoe, he was fired at and wounded, by some party or parties unknown; and his life was preserved only by the special interposition of a gracious Providence. This startling event being so recent, and being still under magisterial investigation, it would be premature to express any judgment on the subject at present; nevertheless we cannot but record our detestation of an attack so unprovoked and alarming, our warmest sympathy with Mr. Moody and his congregation, and our gratitude to Him who walks

amidst the golden candlesticks, with eyes like a flame of fire, and who holds the stars in His right hand.

The subject of the REVIVAL of RELIGION, which was recommended to the attention of Presbytery by last Synod, has been the theme of frequent and earnest deliberations in this Presbytery during the year.

On the evening of the 8th of February, a public meeting was held in Londonderry, which was largely attended, at which ministers of Presbytery, by previous arrangement, delivered addresses on the *History*, *Necessity*, *Marks*, *Means*, and *Results* of a true Scriptural *Revival*. A very large amount of interest and solemnity was manifested on this occasion. It was arranged that ministers should preach on the subject to their congregations, and that those who live most contiguous should exchange pulpits for the purpose of bringing it still more fully before the people. All this has been done, and it has pleased God to visit the principal places in our bounds, as He had previously visited other districts, with a great awakening and concern about religion. Presbytery would gladly recognize in this an answer to the continued prayers of the Church, and an earnest of the blessed promise which is to distinguish the last days: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh;" and would already thankfully exclaim, "He that is mighty hath done to us great things, and holy is His name."

ROBERT NEVIN, Moderator.
JOSIAS A. CHANCELLOR, Clerk.

II. EASTERN PRESBYTERY.

THE EASTERN PRESBYTERY REPORT, that during the past year they have held seven meetings, which were all characterized by unanimity and brotherly concord; and there are not wanting in the condition of the people under our care, notwithstanding many short comings, tokens of the favour of Zion's King.

The ordinances of the Gospel have been dispensed as usual, and the Synodical appointments attended to.

The sacrament of our Lord's Supper has been dispensed twice in each of the congregations having a settled ministry; twice also in the Killinchy congregation; and once in the congregations of Newtownards, Manchester, and Geelong, Australia.

On the 3rd of November a memorial was presented to Presbytery from the Newtownards section of the united congregation of Newtownards and Killinchy, praying for disannexion from the other part; and no opposition being offered, and Commission having been consulted, the prayer of the memorial was granted, and on the 22nd of Febrrary the union was dissolved, and the Nowtownards and Killinchy stations organized into separate congregations. Since the disannexion took

place, Presbytery has made a formal visitation of each, and found in the condition of these congregations much cause for thankfulness to the Church's Head.

A call was moderated by request at Newtownards, on the 17th of May, which was unanimous, and issued in favour of the Rev. William Hanna; and, on the 23rd June, at Manchester, which issued also unanimously, in favour of Mr. James Brown, licentiate.

The reports from the Geelong congregation, are highly satisfactory and encouraging. Elders have been ordained, a congregation organized, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper administered to 43 communicants, while the average attendance on public worship is 120.

Special attention was given to the minute of last Synod on the subject of *Revivals*. Conversations were held at several meetings, and a sermon preached on the subject at our last meeting.

Messrs. Robert M'Gowan Sommerville, and James D. Houston, are students under the care of Presbytery.

THOMAS HOUSTON, D.D., Moderator.
WILLIAM RUSSELL, Clerk.

III. NORTHERN PRESBYTERY.

THE NORTHERN REFORMED PRESBYTERY REPORT, that, during the past Synodical year, they have held their usual quarterly meetings, and have enjoyed in them uninterrupted harmony. In all their congregations the ordinances of grace have been regularly administered, and comforting evidences of Divine recognition have not been withheld. Interest in the various schemes of the Church is on the increase, and the collections ordered by Synod have been attended to. One congregation under the inspection of the Court has received Presbyterial visitation during the year; and, agreeably to Synod's instructions, efforts were made to stimulate the people to dutiful action with regard to ministerial support—and the visited congregation has recently made considerable advance, and will, it is expected, in a short time, afford full satisfaction in that matter. Two of the congregations have exceeded the Synod's *minimum*—in two the *minimum* has been reached, and two are still below it.

At the October meeting, Mr. Thomas Dick, after the usual trials, was licensed to preach the Gospel. His labours since that time have not been confined to the bounds of this Presbytery. Ringrash has been disannexed from Ballyclabber by mutual consent, and is manifesting much zeal and liberality in relation to the attainments of Gospel ordinances. The cry for preaching here, and also in Cloughmills, is very urgent. Presbytery has not been able, except in a very limited

degree, to grant supplies to either—though, in both, there are the most encouraging openings.

At the December meeting, the united congregation of Dervock and Ballymoney was taken under the direct pastoral oversight and judicial inspection of the Presbytery. The Rev. Dr. Stavely continues honorary pastor, the congregation enjoying all the rights and privileges of a vacancy, whilst guaranteeing the annual payment of a fixed retiring allowance to their aged minister.

A call from the congregation of Dervock and Ballymoney, and one from Ballyclabber, have been presented to Mr. James Brown, preacher of the Gospel. Mr. Brown, wishing to acquire more acquaintance with the Church, and desiring more time to deliberate, and more experience as a preacher, declines at present the acceptance of a call.

Presbytery cannot close their report without expressing the great interest they feel in the extraordinary religious awakening in their bounds. They trust there are, in not a few instances, indications of the presence and power of the Divine Spirit in this movement; and they further trust that, as it proceeds, it will be managed more than at present in accordance with the mind of the Spirit, as made known in Holy Scripture.

Mr. Charles Toland, student of the first year, is under the care of Presbytery.

REV. J. A. SMYTH, Moderator.
REV. WM. TOLAND, Clerk.

IV. SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY.

The Southern Reformed Presbytery Report:

1. With gratitude to Him, in whose hand is the life of all flesh, that no breach has been made in their ranks during the past year—that the ministers have in general been blessed with good health to prosecute their Master's work—that the ordinances of grace have been regularly dispensed in all the congregations having stated pastors, and, with one exception, the Lord's Supper dispensed twice in all their congregations.

2. The attendance upon public ordinances in all the congregations and stations has been good, and in general there has been manifested a disposition to recognize more than heretofore, the claims of God upon us in reference to our worldly substance, and the obligation to support His cause more efficiently, arising from the prosperity in worldly things with which He, for the last few years, has blessed our land.

3. The congregation of Ballylane has received very considerable attention during the year. A special visitation was held there on the 1st of February last, when it appeared that, though Presbytery did not

consider it was yet faithfully discharging its duty to its minister, yet there is an improvement in this respect, and that there is more peace and harmony prevailing among the members than heretofore; and now that a neat and commodious house of worship has been erected (chiefly by the exertions of the minister), it is hoped that this ancient congregation will be blessed with returning prosperity.

4. That the vacancies and stations have received a larger supply of preaching than heretofore—Crievah, Fairview, and Dromore have public worship each alternate Sabbath; and Lisdonnan, the first Sabbath of every month. In all these places, except Dromore, the attendances are large and attentive, and there seems to be a growing interest manifested in the cause of our Father's testimony. In Lisdonnan and neighbourhood, the prospect is very encouraging.

5. On the 17th of June, the Society of Covenanters in Dublin was organised into a congregational capacity—two elders were ordained, and, on the ensuing Sabbath, the Lord's Supper was dispensed, for the first time, in connexion with our Church, in that city to *fifteen* communicants—the Rev. Samuel Simms co-operating in this service with your Missionary, the Rev. Robert Allen. It is hoped that this will prove a time of refreshing to that station, and that the good seed sown in Dublin will yet bring forth abundant fruit to God's honour and glory.

6. At our meeting on the 1st of February last, Mr. James Brown was licensed to preach the everlasting Gospel. Mr. Gawn Douglass is the only student, at present, under care of Presbytery. He has, with very considerable distinction, finished his undergraduate course, and attended two sessions at the Theological Hall.

Signed,

JOHN W. GRAHAM, Moderator.
ROBERT WALLACE, Clerk.